



City Manager's Update

May 2010

ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT:

Board of Assessment Review– The BAR completed its deliberations and delivered to the Assessor's office their verified statement of changes. The BAR is currently at the bare minimum number to render decisions following 2 recent resignations. Although the majority of the work required of the BAR occurs in February, they also are tasked with overseeing any changes made to rolls prior to the levy of taxes due to corrections of error. Staff is encouraging the search for replacements to begin as soon as possible. City Assessor Brian Phelps says, "On a personal note I will miss working with both Mr. Steyer and Mr. Bush. The professional approach Mr. Steyer employed was unequaled by the many BAR chairmen I have worked with and was greatly appreciated. Mr. Bush with his energy and straightforward attitude proved to me that you do not need to be a property owner who directly pays taxes to understand the assessment and tax system."

Final Assessment Roll – Changes approved by the BAR were made to the 2010 assessment roll. The roll has been finalized, filed and made available to the public, both in the City Clerk's office and online.

Tax Maps – The Assessment Department is working with the City Engineer and the City's IT/GIS department to improve and streamline our tax mapping. The result will be a single spatial database with one point of change to update our paper maps, electronic maps and web served GIS application.

Real Estate Market – A rebound in the number of sales to near average was seen after the very low numbers for last period. Note that this period is missing a week's worth of data.

City of Watertown Real Estate Market Snapshot

	Current Period Mar-Apr 2010*	Prior 2 Months Jan-Feb 2009**	One Year ago Mar-Apr 2009	2 month averages for last 2 years May 08 –Apr 10
Single-family homes				
Number of valid sales	29	17	20	32
Average sale price	\$131,559	\$151,232	\$133,944	\$ 134,771
2 & 3 family homes				
Number of valid sales	5	2	3	6
Average sale price	\$100,992	\$112,500	\$94,329	\$108,106
Commercial				
Number of valid sales	2	2	1	2
Average sale price	\$167,500	\$735,000	\$70,000	\$1,196,033

* Due to the timing of this report only those sales filed by 4/23 were included.

**Includes previously unreported deeds and/or corrections.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:

Marriages - As of April 30th, this office has issued 367 marriage licenses and performed 225 wedding ceremonies. Unseasonably nice weather has allowed us to do many of these in the gazebo.

Historian Project - Every spring we see an increase in the number of individuals searching for their "roots" and this year is no exception. The latest request is from a gentleman from Concord, Massachusetts, asking us to do research on a blacksmith that was supposedly in our community between 1820 and 1840. This Office is also working on research concerning the Watertown Carriage Company as well as background on some of the children that spent time at the St. Patrick's Orphanage.

Community Outreach – This Office was asked by the Children's Home of Jefferson County to present a program to one of their alternative school classes on April 19th. The presentation was on the history of the community and some of the changes that have occurred over the past 200 years.

BUREAU OF CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Building Permits – This department has received and is currently reviewing building plans for: McDonalds, 1805 State St., demolition and rebuild; Tilted Kilt, 1050 Arsenal St., new restaurant at former Davidson's Site; Hibachi/Japanese Restaurant, 1025 Arsenal St., new restaurant at former Long John Silver's site; Show Time Skating, 144 Eastern Blvd., former Hackett's; The Inn, 1190 Arsenal St, complete interior renovation and minor exterior renovation to carport and lobby; Kellie Sanzone (Dental), 1114 Washington St., Lab Addition; Burger King, 1081 Arsenal St., remodel; 853 Emmett St., complete rehab.; Brent Lewis, 101 Public Sq., awaiting exterior egress plans; East Hills, 1708 Ohio St., renovations; Days Inn, 110 Commerce Park Dr., interior renovation; 172 Palmer St., new single family home; 14-16 Public Sq., rehabilitation of upper apartments; DANC, 122 Ten Eyck St., new single family home. Fifteen (15) building permits for new construction and demolitions have been issued along with sixteen maintenance & repair permits.

Complaints – This office received and investigated a total of 138 complaints, with 12 cases being referred to DPW for compliance and 7 cases being referred to City Attorneys.

Training - Shawn McWayne, Code Enforcement Supervisor, attended an in-service training at the Finger Lakes Building Officials Association March 15-18, 2010 Conference. Topics included were: Commercial Construction Forensics, Sprinkler Forensics, Green Building, Clandestine Meth Labs and various other events during the four (4) day conference. Thomas Johnston, Sr. Code Enforcement Officer and Carolyn Meunier, Code Enforcement Officer attended in-service training in Syracuse April 20-23, 2010.

Appearance Tickets – This office issued another eight (8) Appearance Tickets to City Court to owners of City properties for a range of violations from trash and debris to New York State Property Maintenance Code violations.

Buildings and Grounds – Maintenance crews undertake seasonal tasks to include mowing, mulching, sprucing up the flowers beds and bushes surrounding City Hall and the Library, readying the Library fountains and other various everyday jobs.

CITY COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE:

Delinquent Property Taxes – In accordance with the City Charter the City Comptroller's Office has sent out delinquent notices for any outstanding 2009-10 City, 2009-10 School and/or 2010 County property tax. Below is a summary of the delinquent notices that were mailed and how it compares to prior years.

	Number of Delinquent Notices	Total Amount Outstanding
May 2010	592	\$ 791,870
May 2009	580	\$ 900,657
May 2008	591	\$ 677,723
May 2007	613	\$ 658,371

Parcels with outstanding property tax balances over \$10,000

<u>Property Owner</u>	<u>Property Address</u>	<u>Amount Owed</u>
Watertown Center Dev. LLC	144 Eastern Blvd	\$ 33,034
Spurs LLC	957 Arsenal Street	\$ 21,770
200 Washington St Assoc LLC	120 Washington Street	\$ 67,351
MGNH Inc.	218 Stone Street	\$ 37,163
Sanquist Properties	505 Washington Street	<u>\$ 20,114</u>
Total		\$ 179,432

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT:

Breen Avenue- The project was designed in-house by department staff. The project was approved by the Council to proceed in 2010 at the March 1st Council Meeting. A public meeting was held on April 7, and the bid date was April 12, 2010. DOH has granted approval of the project and DEC approval is pending. Construction is anticipated to start in June.

Gaffney Drive Sewer Upgrade – The Engineering Department has designed the upgrade of the gravity sewer north of the pump station, and prepared plans for acquiring the gravity sewer across the Stateway Plaza property, and is evaluating the pump station for upgrade. The gravity sewer will be replaced by DPW crews, and the easement is pending negotiations with the property owners.

VPP Stimulus Funding- The Engineering Department is processing and managing the Pass Through contract with the NYSDOT for Vendor Placed Paving (VPP) for mill and fill paving projects for Washington Street and Arsenal Street 100-200 Blocks. Engineering is responsible to administer the Pass-Through Agreement, provide construction inspection, and conduct the mandatory project safety audit (SAFETAP). The Arsenal Street portion was completed in September 09. Washington Street is anticipated to begin in June with milling being done by a City contractor and paved in July 2010.

Dosing Station Dam Repair- The Department is progressing plans for structural repairs to the Dosing Station Dam. The project entails scour repair and concrete repair to eliminate the leakage of untreated water into the settling basin. This will reduce the amount of chemicals required to treat the water and also may reduce the occurrence of Disinfectant Byproducts in the water system. This work is broken into two phases. Phase 1 is programmed for the 2010 construction season. Phase 2 is projected to be completed in 2011. The plans have been submitted to the NYSDEC and the USACE for permit approval. The department is compiling additional information that was requested from both agencies to attain the approvals.

North Side Trunk Sewer – Bat-Con Inc., Marcellus NY, started on October 26. The liner in the sewer main has been installed. The liner for the manholes will be installed in the early summer.

Greensview/Ives Sanitary Sewer – The project was designed in-house. NYSDEC has granted approval and a meeting with the property owners is scheduled for May 26th and the bid date is also May 26th. The Massey Street portion of the work is projected to be done in July-August and the golf course section is slated for late in the fall.

Factory Street Reconstruction – The Council approved the agreement for the design of the reconstruction of Factory Street from Mill Street to Huntington Street. This project will be a Locally Administered Federal Aid (LAFA) project. The federal share is 80% and it is anticipated that the State share will be 15% when its budget is approved. An RFP is being prepared for engineering consultant selection. The consultant will be selected from the City of Watertown Locally Driven Selection Arrangement (LDSA) short list. Construction is programmed to start in the spring of 2013.

Sidewalk Program –The 09-10 district has been approved by the Council in December. A public hearing was held on February 1, 2010. Work started on April 26th.

WOTS Lining – Plans and specifications are being prepared for the installation of a slip liner in the section of the Western Outfall Trunk Sewer (WOTS) from Wealtha Ave to the overflow device at the WWTP. The liner system will be similar to what was installed on the NSTS. This project will fix the massive amounts of infiltration and inflow that is leaking into pipe from the drainage ditch located above it. This is required to meet the criteria for the LTCP with the DEC.

Franklin Street Sidewalk – The Engineering Department is working with the Planning Department to facilitate the design of improvements to the sidewalk, curbs, ornamental lighting, and grading. The preliminary designs prepared by a consultant have been reviewed and staff is working with the private utilities to resolve conflicts in the project area. Engineering anticipates providing inspection coverage during construction to help the project stay within budget.

Bicentennial and Marble Street Parks – The Engineering Department is working with the Planning Department and DPW. Engineering and construction inspection support is being provided during the in-house construction of the parks.

J.B. Wise Parking Lot Reconstruction - The Design Services Agreement with Lu Engineers was approved by the Council in June 2007. The final plans and specifications are nearing completion. A contract for construction inspection services is being prepared, with a scheduled start date in the Spring of 2011.

CSO Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) - The City held a meeting with the NYSDEC on May 18, 2006 to restart the CSO LTCP process. DEC approved the Characterization, Monitoring and Modeling plan in September 2006. Stearns & Wheeler was selected as the consultant for the CSO computer modeling from submittals from the RFP. This project provides modeling for five of the fifteen drainage areas within the City that have CSO's. The Council approved the design services agreement at the December 18, 2006 meeting. The completed model of the five basins and final report was received in March 2008. The department is working for approval to conduct modeling of four additional basins with the consultant. WWTP staff prepared the LTCP and submitted it to the NYSDEC by Dec 1, 2008. We are providing additional information to the DEC and EPA. A meeting with the NYSDEC was held on January 6, 2010 in Utica. The City has until August 2010 to complete revisions to the LTCP and submit it to the DEC for final review.

Riggs Ave – The preliminary design is complete. A public meeting was held on August 27, 2008. Final plans and specifications are nearing completion. There is currently 1 easement outstanding for construction. This project is scheduled for a spring 2011 start.

Barben Avenue Reconstruction- Design is underway for the street reconstruction from Washington Street to Holcomb Street. The project is scheduled for FY 11-12.

Clinton Street Reconstruction- Detailed design is underway for the street reconstruction from Washington Street to Holcomb Street. The project is scheduled for FY 13-14.

N. Michigan-Bronson St. –The project is currently being designed in-house by department staff. The project is scheduled for reconstruction in FY 14-15.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Calls for Service - Since the first of the year, to April 26, the City of Watertown Fire Department has responded to 1056 incidents. These include: 547 medical calls, 4 building fire calls, 10 carbon monoxide calls and 18 motor vehicle accidents with injuries. One of the most notable incidents included an extensive vehicle extrication following an accident that occurred on the Arsenal Street

viaduct. Also, a vehicle drove into the WPBS building on Arsenal Street. This incident required responding crews to stabilize the building using shoring techniques. On April 26, a crew responded to a hazardous substance spill at the Lewis County General Hospital. To date, Engine 2, the busiest engine company, responded to 335 incidents.

Inter-Operable Communications - The City Purchasing Agent, in conjunction with Jefferson County, has released the "Request for Proposal" (RFP) for the radio grant. The deadline for vendors to submit their proposal is May 25. At that time Battalion Chief Timmerman and others will start the review process to name a project coordinator.

Pre-Plans - All companies were assigned target hazard building in the City and were assigned to gather information to be placed in a pre-plan format for department use. Twenty buildings were selected for this assignment which included: The Marcy Building, hotels on Arsenal Street, the City's Sewage Treatment Plant, the Children's Home and North Elementary.

Grant - The department was awarded \$27,000 (with 10% match from the City) to purchase thermal imaging cameras from the Assistant to Firefighters Grant 2009. The delivery of these cameras is expected in early May.

Personnel - The department has seen the departure of three key personnel: Firefighter E. Ward who retired on March 27, Chief M. Sayre, who retired on April 10, and Firefighter R. Hogan who retired on April 30.

Firefighter T. Chisamore was honored by the Watertown American Legion on April 8th for his actions at rescuing a victim from the banks of the Black River in October of 2009.

Captain R. Randall, Firefighters D. Compo, B. LeClaire and J. Narrow went to Fort Drum on Thursday, April 15th with Engine 4 to cover Fort Drum's Station 1 so members of their department could attend the memorial service for one of their own, Garrett Loomis.

Department personnel are conducting the annual spring house cleaning of all stations. This includes the stripping and waxing of all the tile floors, shampooing the carpeted areas of the station, painting walls, cleaning windows and yard work.

Training - In March of this year, forty-eight fire department members, who took the Emergency Medical Technician Basic Certification, passed their skill and written exams.

Captain W. Bragger attended his four week training program (First Line Supervisor Training Program) in New York City. He was able to network with newly appointed officers from all over New York State as well as from New York City.

All four platoons visited Samaritan Medical Center's operating rooms to review plans in the event of an emergency were to occur in this sterile area of the hospital.

Department members received training on the new escape rope system. This training was conducted at a building in Maywood Terrace, with permission from the Watertown Housing Authority.

Fire Prevention March and April 2010 - Compliance inspections, for carbon monoxide (CO) detectors, were conducted at Bugbee Apartments, Heritage Apartments, Centennial Apartments, Palmer Street Apartments, Huntington Heights, Kelsey Creek, the Watertown Housing Authority, Curtis Apartments, and the Sisters of Saint Josephs.

Captain DeMar was a speaker at the Life Skills Fair held in conjunction with the Jefferson County Children's Home. Capt. DeMar also spoke in front of an estimated crowd of 700 at the 2010 Odyssey of the Mind held at Watertown High School. Capt. DeMar also conducted a public education event for approximately 70 residents of Curtis Apartment and conducted a public education event for home health nurses, and a fire extinguisher training course at Holiday Inn Express. We also welcomed a small group of special needs children from J.R.C. to the Massey Street Engine House.

35 Furnace Inspections were conducted, and 23 complaints that were left over from the 2009 company level inspections were closed, as well as the installation of 2 KNOX Boxes.

Capt. DeMar was the key-note speaker at the Department of Transportation's annual awards ceremony and banquet on April 29.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT:

Application, Software and System Updates - The Water Department is implementing the Work Order portion of the Cartegraph application with the initial goal of being able to utilize the system to track work orders for the Black River Parks projects and longer term to streamline workflow between the Administration and Distribution office. The next step will be the evaluation of the Water Asset module to determine if it is a good fit for the department.

The fiber network within the Waste Water Treatment plant has been completed and the data network extended to five buildings within the complex (replacing an old Category 3 coax system). PLC's (programmable logic controllers) are being installed in each of these locations as part of the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) upgrade project in the plant.

Helpdesk – The helpdesk has been fairly active. 241 items were closed out in the past two months across the following categories. A significant item was a hardware failure in one of the blade systems. The component that failed was part of the 4 server Citrix farm. Because the system has built in redundancy the function of that particular server was able to be transferred in a short period (less than an hour) to another server in the farm. The failed component was replaced under warranty in 24 hours.





Additional items in the queue contain a number of hardware issues as older equipment continues to fail at an increasing rate.

Parking Tickets and Registration Scanning System – Admit Computer is working with Motorola on an upgrade to the handheld scanner for the Parking tickets that will significantly improve the function of the device in the type of

weather that we experience here in the North Country. Staff continue to work to resolve remaining issues with the desktop application.

GIS – AutoCad to GIS Map Conversion - The process of converting the tax mapping process from its historical base in Computer Assisted Drawing (CAD) to a Geographic Information System (GIS) is well underway. When completed, this change will free up Engineering time, improve accuracy and more easily integrate the map with Assessment data. This CAD to GIS conversion, which will benefit the City in time savings, accuracy and accessibility to information, is currently a focus of Engineering, GIS, and Assessment. This project was first envisioned in 2003.

The historical process of tax map changes was instituted in CAD upon receipt of changes from the Assessment Department. Changes were then implemented in GIS to mirror these CAD changes. The tax maps were printed from the CAD data. The GIS was of particular benefit in displaying the tax map on the internet, making it available to a wide range of consumers. The long-term goal has been to streamline this process while increasing accessibility of the data.

There is also a recognized improvement of accuracy that can be achieved. Two interns were employed for the summer taking GPS readings on the City monument system with the goal of implementing these up-to-date measurements into the structure of the tax map. The monument data will greatly improve the spatial accuracy of the mapping during the conversion process. An additional accuracy is inherent in the GIS technology due to its rule structure which prohibits overlapping drawings or incomplete area coverage, alerting the user to drawing errors that may drive larger inaccuracies.

A GIS-based tax map allows the integration into the display of all the other layers of City information available in GIS. This integration allows an even greater utilization of the visual decision-making process that GIS technology affords.

Map Requests - The following map requests were fulfilled.

Gaffney Drive Sewer Grade Upgrade map for Planning.



Map of Mountaineer Estates for the Water Department flushing program.



Map of northern Gaffney for field work by the Engineering Department and DPW.



Two maps of the City for the Fire Department citywide inspection.

GIS staff compared a hundred plus address locations from the City's Fire department records to online Real properties lists to verify their existence.

Staff continued to work on a new web site design for GIS data.

Staff is working to upgrade the existing circa 1940's City Map with an up to date version using GIS tools.



GIS staff implemented the latest tax map changes into the GIS parcel layer.

GIS Field Work - Shot new infrastructure on outer Arsenal St with PK1 – manholes, clean-outs, lift station. Shot 12 “Storm and 6” sanitary on S. Bellew opposite Social Security while hole was open. Shot additional infrastructure along Bellew Ave S per Pat Keenan. Took GPS readings at site of new basketball courts along William T Field Drive where ends of underground conduit are located to aid electrical crew to find when light poles are constructed and wiring commences.

LIBRARY:

Dr. Seuss Birthday Party – On Tuesday, March 2nd, we had another large group of children and parents to help us celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday. Channel 7 News was again on hand to record the stories, singing and other activities planned for this event. Once again, we were happy to partner with Literacy of Northern New York for this yearly celebration.

Fiction to Film Series – Each Tuesday during the month of March, we showed a film based on a short story: The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, The Birds, Bringing Up Baby and Away From Her. On the following Thursdays, we discussed the film and how it compared to the short story that was read previous to the film showing. Craig Thornton, a local expert in the film study, led the discussions. Participants really liked watching movies at the Library and another series is planned in June.

Loading Dock Rehabilitation – Fixing the loading dock was to be one of the capital projects for the upcoming fiscal year but Mary Corriveau asked the DPW about the possibility of an in-house repair job. We now have nice smooth concrete surfaces and handrails along the stairs and the sides of the dock. The DPW employees also repaired the concrete surface outside the side entrance door. That area had been crumbling to a greater degree every year, despite the maintenance staff's attempts to patch it every summer. A substance was applied that is used on bridges to help the concrete adhere more completely. It set up very quickly and we no longer have to worry about someone twisting an ankle when approaching the side door.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid Program – On Saturday, April 24th, about 50 children enjoyed a program based on the wildly popular series of children's books for elementary school children. They competed in a trivia contest, played games and decorated a journal to take home. (The books are based on the humorous entries from a young boy's journal regarding the trials and tribulations of life in middle school.) Drawings for related prizes were also distributed.



PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

Bicentennial Park and Marble Street Park – Construction started in April on this project by DPW crews at the Bicentennial Park site. Construction of the new basketball court is underway along with sidewalk and fence installation and utility work. The City Department of Public Works is completing the project which will enable the City to complete the project within the construction budget and at the same time get reimbursed for some of our staff costs.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program – The New York State Department of State initiated the 60-day review of the Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) on April 28, 2010. State, federal, and regional agencies and adjacent municipalities have until June 28, 2010 to make comments. The LWRP is posted online at <http://nyswaterfronts.com/LWRP.asp>.

Planning Board – During the last two months, the Planning Board has considered a variety of applications including a request for site plan approval for the construction of building additions totaling 2,830 square feet at 1050 Arsenal Street for a new Tilted Kilt restaurant. The Board also considered a zone change request for Planned Development District # 23 and a request for site plan approval for a new 88,044 square foot, 4 story, 132-unit Hilton Garden Inn hotel at 1290 Arsenal Street. Also under consideration were two requests for a waiver of site plan approval for a 704 square foot addition to the Italian American Civic Association at 192 Bellew Avenue and for building additions totaling 1,621 square feet to The Inn at 81 at 1190 Arsenal Street. Finally, the Planning Board considered a minor subdivision request for 200 Academy Street.

Street Tree Program – Arbor Day 2010 was conducted by members of Tree Watertown on April 30 and included the planting of 10 trees in the 600 Block of Hamlin Street. One tree was planted for each of the 10 years that the City of Watertown has been recognized as a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation. 10 different species of trees were planted to highlight the importance of diversifying the tree species within the community to prevent possible devastation to trees by insects and diseases. The event also included a proclamation by Mayor Graham. Tree Watertown partnered with children and families from the Watertown Loving Education at Home Organization for this event. Over 50 people participated in the event.



Staff worked with the **Watertown Noon Rotary Club** to help coordinate their annual tree planting program by selecting tree species and planting locations while the Department of Public Works assisted by digging the planting holes and obtaining planting supplies. Rotary's annual tree planting project was held on Saturday, May 1. Nearly forty volunteers gathered on Elm Street where 31 trees were planted.

Staff also coordinated the **Department of Public Works' Annual Tree Planting Project**. The project involved the planting of 52 trees at various locations throughout the City. The 2010 planting program (93 trees total) was funded by the Northern New York Community Foundation who provided a \$4,500 grant through the Carolyn Whitney Tree Planting Fund and a grant of \$2,000 from the Rotary Club.

Wayfinding Signs – All of the materials needed for the fabrication of the wayfinding signs have been purchased and the Department of Public Works has begun producing them. Once installed, the signage will provide direction throughout the City to various venues such as Thompson Park, the Fairgrounds, our River Parks as well as JCC, the Library, the Historical Society and the Sci-Tech Center. This project was part of the Downtown Awareness Project and was funded by a 2003 EPF Grant from the Department of State and matching funds from the City.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Training – Members of the Watertown Police Department are currently undergoing semi-annual range instruction. In the fall of each year we have a full day of range training and this encompasses all facets of firearms training. Each spring we bring officers out for a refresher. This approximate 2 hour training is conducted on shift and is when manpower is sufficient to avoid overtime. We feel this training allows officers to hone their skills and keeps them prepared to safely perform their duties.

“Officer of the Year” American Legion Post 61 – Each year the American Legion recognizes a Police Officer, State Trooper, Deputy Sheriff, Corrections Officer and a Fire Fighter. This year’s nomination from the WPD was **Officer Jason Badalato**. Officer Badalato was recognized for all his work as the PD’s Juvenile Officer. His duties include DARE officer, liaison with Family Court, Probation and City schools. He sits on several boards dealing with children including youth court, CAPC, and Cornell Cooperative extension youth/family advisory group. He also gives of his time both on and off duty to serve the youth of this community. In the nomination by a peer of Officer Badalato it was noted that *“he is one of the most active officers in the department when it comes to performing community events. He takes time away from his own family to be a part of the community.”* We are very happy to see Officer Jason Badalato receive this award.

DARE Truck - On April 8th Mayor Graham, Chief Goss, Sergeant Labarge, and DARE Officer Badalato received from Brad Charlton of FX Caprara Car Companies the keys to a 2009 Dodge Ram Pickup truck for use by the Dare Program. This donation brings attention to the DARE program. As the photograph shows, the truck is very clearly marked with DARE logos and is a huge hit with the children. The truck is utilized each day and parked at school and is a visible reminder of the program.



The truck is also used for parades in which the kids are encouraged to participate. Officer

Badalato teaches approximately 400 students each year in the Public and Parochial School system. We have had very positive responses from the student and their parents in regards to the lessons learned through DARE.

Notable Cases – March and April 2010

On March 15th, 2010, **RAMON ROBLES** pled guilty to Murder in the second degree in Jefferson County Court. This was in full satisfaction to the charges against him. To recap this case his girlfriend Annette Vasquez went missing in December 2008. In February 2009, WPD detectives and NYSP went to Puerto Rico and interviewed Robles. Charges were filed against Robles at that time but her remains were not found until March 2009. He was finally returned to Jefferson

County in November 2009. With this guilty plea he will be sentenced to 20 years to life in the NY State Prison system.

On March 30th members of WPD and the Metro Jeff Drug task force arrested an adult and two teenagers after they discovered 200 bags of heroin in a Mill St. apartment. The investigation continued and police then searched a room in an Arsenal St. motel and seized another 200 bags of heroin and \$4,000.00 in cash. The 400 bags of heroin had a street value of nearly \$10,000.00. All three subjects, one from Queens NYC, were arraigned and held in Jefferson County Jail pending Grand Jury presentation.

On April 19th members of WPD and the Metro Jeff Drug task force executed a search warrant at an apartment in the 600 block of LeRay St. Seized from the residence was \$1,500.00 in cash and 392 bags of heroin and over one ounce of crack cocaine, drug paraphernalia and a small amount of marihuana. The street value of the drugs seized is over \$20,000.00. Arrested in the raid were six adults. They ranged from 41 to 18 years of age and four were from the New York City area. Charges in this case were several class “B” felonies of Criminal Possession of a controlled substance, criminal nuisance a class “E” felony and unlawful possession of marihuana. All defendants were processed at the Public safety Building and held pending arraignments and Grand Jury action.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:



Pavement Maintenance Operations – Patch crews received and investigated twenty (20) pothole and pavement related calls. A routine pothole patching schedule was also performed. Crews placed forty five (45) tons of temporary patch material in potholes throughout the winter/spring season. Once the asphalt plant opens, the crew will replace the temporary patches and repair the pothole with a permanent patch. The early break in the weather has allowed for the crew to also perform crack sealing operations. Crack sealing has taken place on Frontenac Street, Gale Street, Griffin Street, Meade Street,

Mohawk Street, New York Avenue, Phelps Street and Seneca Street. The crews also crack sealed the City-owned parking facilities at City Hall, the Library and Stone Street. In addition to the crack sealing operations, a crew was trained on performing the proper techniques for repairs to the synthetic surfaces located on Public Square.

Concrete Projects – The concrete crew performed repairs on deteriorated portion of the staircase/loading dock at the Flower Memorial Library. The work included patching portions of the wall and resurfacing the ramps, stairs and vertical surfaces. Custom handrail system was fabricated and installed upon completion of the repair work. In addition to the work completed at the library, the crew repaired the curbs along the Mill Street Bridge.



Street Sweeping Operations – This year street sweeping operations commenced on March 16th. The early start has allowed crews to complete two (2) passes throughout the City and a total of ten (10) passes through the Downtown Business District. In addition to sweeping the City streets, crews have completed shared service work for the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). The shared service included the sweeping of Arsenal Street, Bradley Street, Eastern Boulevard, Gifford Street and outer State Street. The crew, following standard operating procedure, will now sweep on a day-to-day basis predicated upon manpower availability. The Downtown Business District will be swept every Friday during the midnight to 8:00 a.m. shift throughout the season.

Sanitary and Storm Sewer Infrastructure – Sewer crews have investigated a total of twenty two (22) sewer back-up calls, repaired seven (7) sanitary sewer laterals and repaired/replaced fourteen (14) sewer structures. Crews have also made repairs to the sanitary sewer systems on Clay Street and West Main Street. In addition to the repair work, crews have completed shared service work for the NYSDOT. This work included the cleaning of storm drains on Bradley Street, Eastern Boulevard, Gifford Street and outer State Street. The crews have also cleaned sewer mains along Arsenal Street, Clay Street and Thompson Boulevard and storm drainage ditches along Holcomb Street and Thompson Boulevard.



DPW Spring Tree Planting – Approximately ninety three (93) trees arrived the week of April 26th for the annual spring planting of City street trees. The Buildings & Grounds crew planted approximately fifty (+50) trees throughout the City and prepared forty two (42) tree planting holes for the local volunteer groups that planted the remaining trees. This year's tree planting operations took about 2-3 days to complete.

Fiber Optic Network – This project includes the installation of a fiber optic line network to various City facilities. The installation of fiber conduit to the Public Safety Building continues to progress. The Electric Department installed conduit along Waterman Drive last year and have now completed the installation of two (2) conduit runs, approximately 1,400 feet each, along South Bellevue Avenue. This installation completes a conduit run from the Public Safety Building to Coffeen Street. This conduit run will be connected to the Coffeen Street run and will provide a fiber connection between the Public Safety Building and the Watertown Municipal Arena.



River Parks Improvement Project – This project includes the construction of a basketball court, pavilion and asphalt trail system at Bicentennial Park, as well as a pavilion, rest rooms, and asphalt trail system at Marble Street Park. Construction of the Bicentennial Park basketball court is well under way. The Electric Department has provided the conduit runs to the future light pole bases and the Sewer Crew is completing the stormwater drainage system around the basketball court area. Buildings & Grounds and Roads Crews have begun the grade work and the stone base is being constructed. In addition to the work being completed on the basketball court, the Electric Department has begun the installation of the electrical service for the pavilion and the (2) RV pedestals that will be located within Bicentennial Park and the Concrete Crew has installed the ADA accessible ramps that will connect the asphalt trail system.



Way-finding Signage – There are a total of ninety-seven (97) way-finding signs that will be installed throughout the City. Ninety (90) of these signs were to be produced in-house by the department's sign shop, while the remaining signs will be custom fabricated. Production of these signs is nearing completion and the Sign Crew is about to begin the installation of the first round of signs. The crew will begin the installation at the Watertown Municipal Arena and work toward Coffeen Street.

Preparation for the 2010 Spring/Summer Schedule at the Arena

– The Figure Skating Show held March 20th marked the last major ice-related event of the season. Immediately following the show, crews began the ice removal process. As the ice was being removed, crews prepared the Arena for the upcoming 2010 Spring/Summer Schedule of Events. The Wratten's Annual Trailer and RV Show kicked off this season's event schedule on March 26, 27, and 28th.

Over the course of the 2009/10 winter season: the Arena hosted 47 birthday parties, sharpened 1,214 skates, saw 11,392 skaters and a slight increase in Rock'n Skate attendance with 8,618 patrons.



Parks & Recreation Programs & Events – The Watertown Municipal Arena has hosted several events so far this season. Events include the Wratten's Trailer & RV Show, a 2CW Wrestling Event, the Northern New York Builders Exchange Home Show, a Car & Truck Show that was a first for the Arena and the 2009 Annual Heart Walk. The early spring has allowed for one of the earliest season of baseball games at the Fairgrounds Baseball Field. There has also been activity at the Fairgrounds Softball Fields, the Multi-purpose field, Kostyk field and the North Side Softball Field.



Watertown CitiBus – The CitiBus Transit Supervisor attended the Transit Awareness Day event that was held in Albany on March 1, 2010 at the Legislative Office Building. The event provided the Transit Supervisor an opportunity to meet with representatives and discuss the impact the State has on small transit systems. CitiBus staff have also attended and completed the NYDMV 19A Certified Examiner Refresher Training and the quarterly Transportation Commission meeting was conducted at the CitiBus Facility. Four members of the commission were re-instated by the Council for a term of three (3) years and

will serve until 2013. A total of eighty-two (82) passengers have purchased the monthly unlimited ride pass since the option became available on January 1, 2010.

Community Events – Public Works continues to integrate work/asset management tools in all aspects of the operation. Currently, the department is utilizing these tools to develop a standard protocol for the efficient set-up & breakdown of traffic control devices required for community events such as parades and downtown festivals. The department is also creating maps to provide the various organizations and agencies hosting the event with the locations and capacities of various assets, such as electric services, that are available for use during the event.



WATER DEPARTMENT:

Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant – A Disinfection By-Products Study to find the most cost effective methods to deal with stricter federal regulations that will affect the treatment processes for water produced at the City of Watertown water treatment facility to deal with the development of disinfection by-products that occur as water passes through and spends time in the

distribution systems is proceeding well. The City Council approved the Agreement for Professional Services with Hazen and Sawyer, P.C. at the April 20, 2009 meeting.

The City and the Town of Watertown applied for a \$100,000 grant for the project that will cover 90% of the cost. The City and Town have each agreed to pay 5% or up to \$5,000 each. Work is progressing well on this project and re-imbursements have been coming in from the State and the Town of Watertown in a very timely manner.

Brian Gaffney, our Chief Water Treatment Plant Operator, and Katie Hoek, representing the engineering firm of Hazen and Sawyer, delivered a joint presentation of the DBP Study and findings to date at the spring meeting of the New York Section, AWWA in Saratoga in April.

The project is scheduled to be completed in June 2010, with a final report and recommendations for reducing disinfection by-products levels at various points in the systems. A final workshop to review the draft report is anticipated to be held the last week of May.

Water Treatment Facility Upgrades and Accomplishments – Water plant maintenance staff has replaced a 35 HP low lift pump with the spare pump and sent the original to the factory for repairs. The filter console instrumentation has been upgraded on consoles #4 and #5 to provide cleaner signals to the operations room. This completes a phased project that was started last fall.

A second employee has passed the NY State examination for pesticide technician certification. It is necessary for us to have certified pesticide technicians to oversee application of copper sulfate to control algae in the coagulation basin. Until now, only the chief operator held a certification.

The 2010 audit and assessment of our lab by NELAC (The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference) has been completed for this year. Some minor corrective actions were recommended and have been implemented.

The City Engineer has prepared the plans and specifications to have the Dosing Station Dam repairs done this summer. Plans have been submitted to the NYSDEC for review and approval for the permits that will allow the work to be done.

Water Distribution – Distribution crews continued to install and repair water service lines in the City, even in the winter. Since January 1st of this year, twelve (12) residential water services have been repaired and nine (9) have been replaced. Twenty two (22) frozen water services were thawed and several frozen water meter service calls have been made. Four (4) fire hydrants damaged in motor vehicle accidents have been repaired.

Crews have also inspected 136 private hydrants throughout the City. The individual property owners and the Fire Department will be advised of the results of the inspections. The owners may hire City crews or a private contractor to make repairs of any deficiencies found during the inspection process. This is done by City crews to help ensure that these hydrants are in good working order in the event that our Fire Department personnel are required to utilize them in the event of a fire on the respective properties.

Distribution crews have responded to and repaired ten (10) water main breaks and service leaks since January 1st of this year.



WATER MAIN BREAK REPAIRS IN PROGRESS

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Crews have also performed several leak surveys in areas where water was flowing from an unknown source. In most instances, the source turned out to be

related to something other than our water system. Crews have assisted consulting engineers in performing fire flow tests in relation to two newly proposed developments, Vision Development Phase II and The Tilted Kilt Pub on Arsenal Street.



Maintenance crews replaced the two large hatches on the City's reservoirs at Thompson Park. The original hatches were installed in 1984 and had deteriorated such that they did not open or close easily or seal tightly anymore. They were much larger than needed, so we downsized. The hatch replacement was recommended by the NYSDOH during an inspection last season in conjunction with the Comprehensive Performance Evaluation of our water facilities.



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NEW HATCHES INSTALLED AT THE THOMPSON PARK RESERVOIRS



Crews also cleared brush around the perimeter fencing for visual and security reasons. They also pointed up some of the concrete work on the exposed portion of the exterior walls of the reservoirs.

The department has worked closely with the I.T. Department and the Fire Department on the preparation of a GIS hydrant mapping system and updated hydrant and fire flow data base.

Crews have laid out and marked service locations for over 450 UFPO requests.

Spring clean-up was done at Water Works Park in preparation for the nice weather.

The water gate valve record books have been electronically updated and hard copies are being prepared for use in the field by water service and engineering department personnel.

Commerce Park Drive Water Main / Gaffney Drive Hotels – The City Council approved a budget amendment on September 28, 2009 for funding the cost of extending the water main on Commerce Park Drive to accommodate future development in the area. Bids for pipe and materials were approved by the City Council on October 19th, paving the way for the construction to begin. City Water Department crews will install approximately 800' of 8" water main on this project.

In November, City crews installed 235 feet of new 8" water main on the StateWay Plaza end of the project. The final connection and disinfection will take place in the spring. The easement for the section on Commerce Park Drive was received in December. That will allow us to install the remaining 565 feet of 8" pipe across from the Post Office this spring to complete the installation and the loop. This work was driven by the proposal to build two hotels and a restaurant near the intersection of Gaffney Drive and Commerce Park Drive. We are in the process of reviewing revised plans for the water main work associated with these hotels.

Water Meter Replacements – The meter service crew continues to install the radio reading meters as water meters are replaced for various reasons. 340 radio reading units have been installed since July 1, 2009 and there is now a total 1,110 radio read units in the system. This is approximately 13.2% of the water meters in the city. We continue replacing damaged or outdated meters with radio read style meters, as well as setting these meters in all new installations. Radio reading capability has made reading meters in pit settings much safer and has made reading meters at multiple unit housing developments faster and safer, as well.

Bi-annual Shut-off of Delinquent Water Accounts – The Water Department sent out shut-off notices on March 22, 2010, and posted non-owner occupied properties for 909 delinquent accounts in the amount of \$287,384.09. Shut offs began on April 19, 2010, for the remaining 169 delinquent accounts totaling \$39,727.92 that were on the original list. 128 accounts were actually shut prior to payment. 34 accounts with a total of \$10,502.72 remain shut as of this date. 22 of these properties were vacant as of April 26, 2010.